

2

National Detector
Dog Manual

Procedures

Procuring Detector Dogs

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Introduction

Procuring dogs is necessary to ensure that adequate numbers of high-quality detector dog candidates are available to the National Detector Dog Training Center (NDDTC) where they are prepared for detection work at international airports, border crossings, mail facilities, and cargo facilities throughout the United States. The goal of the Agency's detector dog program is to procure dogs that possess the following characteristics:

- ◆ Self-confidence
- ◆ Soundness
- ◆ High food drive
- ◆ Sociability
- ◆ Adaptability

The intent of this section is to familiarize Regional Canine Program Coordinators (RCPCs) and regionally selected Canine Officers to initially screen potential detector dogs, and local managers with the detector dog procurement process. RCPCs are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate health tests are administered and that proper shipping procedures are arranged prior to sending dogs to the NDDTC.

Following is a list of the documents that facilitate the procurement process. Each is explained in this section along with a sample that may be used by those designated to perform the steps of the process.

- ◆ Telephone Interview Worksheet
- ◆ Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement
- ◆ Initial Screening Process Worksheet
- ◆ Temperament Evaluation Worksheet
- ◆ Health Evaluation Protocol Worksheet
- ◆ Final Release Form
- ◆ Airline Flight Tracking Worksheet
- ◆ Tracking Record and Feedback Worksheet

Procuring Requirements

Canine Officers must meet the following requirements before being considered to procure dogs for the program:

1. Have at least three years with the Detector Dog Program
2. Have a fully successful evaluation
3. Maintain a detector dog team proficiency above 80 percent
4. Pass annual validation if given
5. Have permission of their managers
6. Be recommended by their RCPC
7. Be trained by RCPC to procure detector dogs
8. Be selected by RPM and RCPC

RCPCs will review Canine Officers' procurement lists annually. See **Appendix K** for a request to procure canines form.

Sources

Following is a list of suggested sources for seeking detector dogs. Typically, however, the procurement process begins when private individuals, rescue organizations, or shelters contact a Canine Officer or field work location.

- ◆ Local newspapers
- ◆ Internet (e.g., <http://www.petfinders.org/>)
- ◆ Breeders
- ◆ Breed rescue groups
- ◆ Shelters

Summary of Procurement Process

The procurement process is a sequence of steps that will ensure that the most qualified dogs are sent to the NDDTC for training and final preparation to become detector dogs. If a dog fails any part of the temperament evaluation or health screening, it cannot be accepted by the NDDTC. The steps of the process are summarized below, followed by their details in [Table 2-4-1](#).

- 1.** Interview the owners of the dog using the Telephone Interview Worksheet.
- 2.** Contact an RCPC with the results of the interview to receive permission to proceed with an initial screening.
- 3.** Complete a Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement if it is necessary to remove the dog from the owner's property to initially evaluate it.
- 4.** Conduct an initial evaluation of the dog using the Initial Screening Process Worksheet.
- 5.** If the dog passes the initial evaluation, complete a Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement so it can be removed from the owner's property to evaluate its temperament.
- 6.** Evaluate the dog's temperament at a public location using the Temperament Evaluation Worksheet.
- 7.** If the dog passes the temperament evaluation, contact the NDDTC to ensure that the dog can be accepted.
- 8.** Schedule a veterinary appointment to evaluate the dog's health following the Health Evaluation Protocol Worksheet.
- 9.** If the dog passes the health evaluation, complete a Final Release Form.
- 10.** If you wish to monitor the status of the dog's evaluation and training at the NDDTC, complete a Tracking Record and Feedback Worksheet.
- 11.** Ship the dog to the NDDTC using the Airline Flight Tracking Worksheet. Contact NDDTC prior to shipping.

TABLE 2-4-1: Steps of the Procurement Process

Step:	Further Action to Take:	Document Step Using:
Interview the owner(s) of the dog	None	Telephone Interview Worksheet
Contact an RCPC with the results of the interview	Receive permission to proceed with an initial screening	No documentation required
Complete a limited release form if it is necessary to remove the dog from the owner's property to initially evaluate it	None	Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement
Conduct an initial evaluation of the dog	None	Initial Screening Process Worksheet
If the dog passes the initial evaluation	Complete a Limited Release Form so it can be removed from the owner's property to evaluate the dog's temperament	Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement
Evaluate the dog's temperament at a public location	None	Temperament Evaluation Worksheet
If the dog passes the temperament evaluation	Contact the NDDTC to ensure that the dog can be accepted	No documentation required
Schedule to have a veterinarian evaluate the dog's health	None	Health Evaluation Protocol Worksheet
If the dog passes the health evaluation	Complete a Final Release Form	Final Release Form
If you wish to monitor the status of the dog's evaluation and training at the NDDTC	Complete a Tracking Record and Feedback Worksheet	Tracking Record and Feedback Worksheet
Ship the dog to the NDDTC	Contact NDDTC prior to shipping	Airline Flight Tracking Worksheet

Conduct Telephone Interview

The telephone interview is used to determine whether to continue evaluating the dog as a potential candidate. The officers procuring detector dogs in the field should coordinate their efforts with their RCPCs and the NDDTC.

Use the Telephone Interview Worksheet in [Appendix K](#). The worksheet has been printed so it can be removed, photocopied, and reused.

If the dog is **not** screened out in the telephone interview, arrange a time when the dog's owner(s) can be contacted for further evaluation.



Contact an RCPC with the results of the telephone interview to receive permission to proceed with an initial screening.

Complete Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement

If it is necessary to remove the dog from the owner's property to initially evaluate it, complete a Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement. Refer to **Figure 2-4-1** for a model of the form and to **Appendix K** for a form you can copy.

Subject: Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement

I _____ do hereby give permission to
(Owner)

_____ of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
(USDA Representative)

to take _____, _____
(Name of Dog) (Breed of Dog)

off my property for the sole purpose of temperament testing and health screening. Health screening will be done at no cost to me, the dog's owner. It is my understanding that I am **not** relinquishing legal claim or ownership at this time. I understand that if the dog is **not** accepted into the USDA Detector Dog Program, the dog will be returned to me at my expense. However, if the dog is accepted into the Program, the USDA assumes the responsibility to have

_____ spayed or neutered. At that time, a final
(Name of Dog)

release statement will be signed relinquishing my legal claim to the dog.

USDA Representative

Owner/Agent

PPQ Work Location

Date: _____

Date: _____

FIGURE 2-4-1: Model of a Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement

Conduct Initial Screening

If the dog is **not** screened out in the telephone interview and permission is received from the RCPC and the NDDTC to continue screening the dog, the next step is to conduct an initial evaluation of the dog. The purpose of this screening is to determine if the dog initially meets the criteria as a potential candidate for the Agency's detector dog program. The initial screening covers the following areas:

- ◆ Food drive level
- ◆ Sociability
- ◆ Intelligence and ability to be trained
- ◆ Physical soundness
- ◆ Anxiety level

Use the Initial Screening Process Worksheet to evaluate the dog. The worksheet is located in **Appendix K** and has been printed so it can be removed, photocopied, and reused.

TABLE 2-4-2: Action to Take After Completing the Initial Screening

If the result of the initial screening is that the dog:	Then:
Passes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Complete a Limited Release Form and Sterilization Agreement, so the dog can be removed from the owner's property to evaluate its temperament2. Continue with the procurement process by evaluating the dog's temperament at a public place such as an airport <p>NOTE: Consult with the RCPC on the results of the initial screening before continuing with the temperament evaluation</p>
Fails	Arrange for the return of the dog to the owners at the owner's expense

Evaluate Temperament

The formal evaluation of the dog's temperament is ideally conducted at an airport, cargo facility, or border crossing for which the dog is being procured.

Use a Temperament Evaluation Worksheet to evaluate the dog's reaction to various stimuli and situations and to record a general impression of the dog's potential performance. The worksheet is located in **Appendix K** and has been printed so it can be removed, photocopied, and reused.

TABLE 2-4-3: Action to Take After Completing the Temperament Evaluation

If the result of the temperament evaluation is that the dog:	Then:
Passes demonstrating a high food drive and confidence and stability in strange surroundings (Sum of mean ratings must total 18 or above)	1. Contact the RCPC with the results of the temperament test 2. Consult with the RCPC and the NDDTC to receive guidance about proceeding to an evaluation of the dog's health 3. Have the RCPC contact the NDDTC to ensure that there is available space for the candidate dog
Fails (Dog did not achieve the minimum mean rating for a given part of the evaluation)	Arrange for the return of the dog to its owners at the owner's expense

Evaluate Health

The health screening must be performed in the following sequence by an accredited and licensed veterinarian. The RCPC or Canine officer regionally approved to procure accompanies the dog to the veterinarian's office for the health screening.

1. General exam
2. Occult heart worm test
3. Blood test
4. Ventro-dorsal x-ray of hips and lateral spinal x-rays
5. Eating habits



At any point in the health screening process, the dog may be eliminated if the results indicate abnormalities.

Use the Health Evaluation Protocol Worksheet to record the results of the health screening. The worksheet is located in **Appendix K** and has been printed so it can be removed, photocopied, and reused.

General Exam

After the general exam is completed, ensure that the veterinarian's findings are within normal limits.

TABLE 2-4-4: Action to Take After a Veterinarian Completes the General Exam

If the findings of the general exam are:	Then:
Outside normal limits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note that the dog is an unacceptable candidate 2. STOP the evaluation process. 3. Arrange for the return of the dog to its owners at the owner's expense
Within normal limits	Continue with the health screening

Heart Worm Test

Request that the veterinarian perform an occult heart worm test.

TABLE 2-4-5: Action to Take After a Veterinarian Completes the Heart Worm Test

If the result of the heart worm test is:	Then:
Positive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note that the dog is an unacceptable candidate. 2. STOP the evaluation process. 3. Arrange for the return of the dog to its owners at their expense.
Negative or within normal limits	Continue with the health screening.

Blood Test

Request that the veterinarian perform pre-surgical blood work or a blood test that includes liver values, kidney values, and a complete blood count. Refer to the Health Evaluation Protocol Worksheet for specific test needs.

TABLE 2-4-6: Action to Take After a Veterinarian Completes the Blood Test

If the results of the blood test are:	Then:
Outside normal limits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note that the dog is an unacceptable candidate. 2. STOP the evaluation process. 3. Arrange for the return of the dog to its owners at their expense.
Within normal limits	Continue with the health screening.

X-rays

Request that the veterinarian perform ventro-dorsal pelvic x-rays and thoracic-lumbar junction spinal x-rays. Hip and spine x-rays must be taken in accordance with positioning guidelines set out by American Veterinary Medicine Association (AVMA). Refer to [Figure 2-4-2](#).



The technique established by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, Inc. should be used but certification is not required.



FIGURE 2-4-2: AVMA Positioning Criteria for X-rays

The x-rays must be properly identified and labeled as LEFT and RIGHT.



The dog must be anesthetized to perform x-rays.

The NDDTC veterinarian must view the x-rays for final approval. Inform the field veterinarian that the purpose of final approval by the NDDTC veterinarian is to ensure uniformity in the NDDTC standards of approval for hip and spine x-rays.

TABLE 2-4-7: Action to Take After the NDDTC Veterinarian Views the X-Rays

If the x-rays show that:	Then:
Hips are dysplastic or deformed in any way	1. Note that the dog is an unacceptable candidate 2. STOP the evaluation process. 3. Arrange for the return of the dog to its owners at their expense
Within normal limits (OFA rating of fair or above)	Continue with the health screening

Eating Habits

Request that the veterinarian perform an evaluation of the dog's eating habits to determine if there is evidence of kennel stress.

TABLE 2-4-8: Action to Take After a Veterinarian Evaluates the Dog's Eating Habits

If the eating habits of the dog reveal:	Then:
Stress or failure to adjust to the kennel	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note that the dog is an unacceptable candidate2. STOP the evaluation process.3. Arrange for the return of the dog to its owners at their expense
Normal ability of the dog to adjust to the kennel	<p>Have veterinarian administer the following vaccines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rabies (one-year vaccine)2. DHLPP (distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, parvo virus)3. Corona4. Bordetella (intra nasal)5. Fecal examination (internal parasites) <p>NOTE: The NDDTC does not require an urinalysis or Lyme disease vaccine; therefore, do not request these</p>

Complete Final Release Form

If the dog successfully passes all aspects of the initial screening, temperament testing, and health evaluation; then, complete a Final Release Form. Refer to [Figure 2-4-3](#) for a model of the form and to [Appendix K](#) for a form to copy, which is placed on USDA letterhead.

Subject: Final Release Form

I _____ do hereby relinquish any legal claim
(Owner)

and/or ownership that I have for _____,
(Name of Dog)

_____ by donation/sale to the U.S. Department
(Breed of Dog) (circle one)

of Agriculture for use as a working detector dog. Furthermore, I understand that this dog will be adopted by the public through Federal government procedures upon the retirement of the dog from active duty.

Owner's signature: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

I _____ request to be given first right of refusal to the above mentioned dog in the event that it does not pass the training program. I understand it will be my responsibility to pay expenses associated with the dog's return.

Owner/Agent

Date: _____

FIGURE 2-4-3: Model of a Final Release Form

Complete Tracking Record and Feedback Worksheet

To monitor the status of the dog's evaluation and training at the NDDTC, complete the top half of a Tracking Record and Feedback Worksheet. The worksheet is located in **Appendix K** and has been printed so it can be removed, photocopied, and reused.

Attach the completed Tracking Record and Feedback Worksheet to the Temperament Evaluation Worksheet.



NDDTC will notify the RCPC with an update to the tracking worksheet for each request submitted.

Complete Airline Flight Tracking Worksheet

Arrange for and ship the dog to the NDDTC using the Airline Flight Tracking Worksheet. The worksheet is located in **Appendix K** and has been printed so it can be removed, photocopied, and reused.



Do not ship dogs on weekends, holidays or outside normal working hours without pre-approval from the NDDTC.

Do not use Acepromazine on any dog being shipped to the NDDTC.

